

Beyond an Apple a Day: Providing Consumer Health Information at Your Library

Two-Part Webinar Series



National Network of Libraries of Medicine,
South Central Region and TSLAC

Part 1- April 15

- Evolution of Consumer Health and e-patients
- Role of the Librarian in Consumer Health
- Consumer Health and the Reference Interview
- Consumer Health Resources:
an Introduction to MedlinePlus.gov

Consumer Health – then and now...

- Before 1972, doctors told patients what they wanted patients to know, and what they wanted patients to do.
- 1972 – *AHA Patient Bill of Rights*
 - “The patient has the right and is encouraged to obtain from physicians and other direct caregivers relevant, current, and understandable information about his or her diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis.”

Realities of Health Care today

- ❑ Patients are now asked to make decisions about their own disease process.
- ❑ Most patients do not have the tools to make these kinds of decisions



What's an e-patient?

- "...individuals who are equipped, enabled, empowered and engaged in their health and health care decisions." [Ferguson]
- "... new breed of informed health consumers, using the Internet to gather information about a medical condition of particular interest to them." [Wikipedia]

Consumer Health on the Web

■ Pew Internet and American Life Project

- 61% of American adults look online for health information
- 80% of US Internet users have searched for information on at least one health topic
- 52% of searches on the Internet are on behalf of someone else
- 60% of e-patients say they (or someone they know) has been helped by following medical advice or health information from the Internet
- 66% started at a search engine for their most recent inquiry

Consumer Health on the Web

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- BUT ...

Only one quarter of online health seekers said they always or usually check the source and date of health information online!

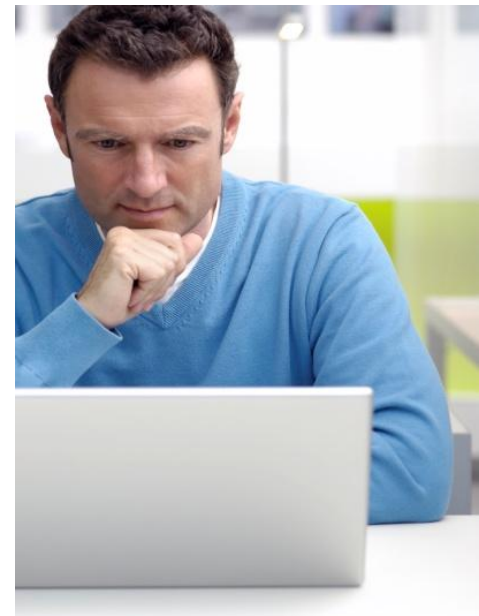
Role of the Librarian

- What is the role of the librarian in helping people find the information they need to make good decisions about their health?



Health Literacy

- “The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions” [*Healthy People 2010*]



Why is Health Literacy Important?

- ❑ To fill out a patient information form
- ❑ To understand health-related instructions
- ❑ To follow discharge instructions
- ❑ To identify signs
- ❑ To keep appointments
- ❑ To understand insurance
- ❑ To sign consent forms



Issues in Reference



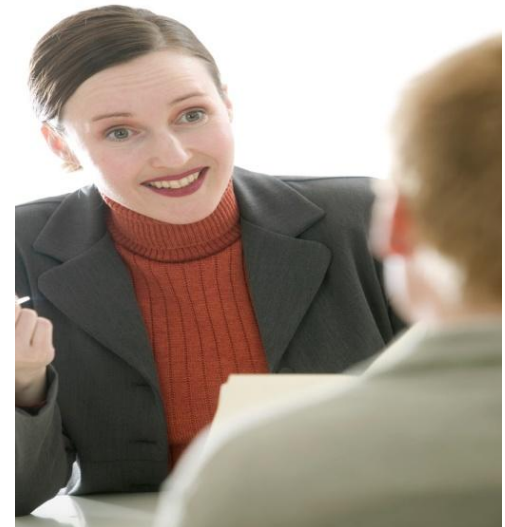
The Reference Interview in the context of health information

- What are these patrons really looking for?
 - Sick lick vomiting
 - Cyclic vomiting
 - Dropped Bladder
 - Cystocele
 - Fireballs in the Eucharist
 - Fibroids in the uterus
 - Smiling Mighty Jesus
 - Spinal Meningitis

The Reference Interview

...in the context of health information

- ❑ Be empathetic
- ❑ Be an active listener
- ❑ Use open ended questions
- ❑ Respect privacy / confidentiality
- ❑ Be prepared for emotions
- ❑ Be aware of body language



The Reference Interview

- ❑ Language and cultural barriers pose special problems
- ❑ Know the limits of your collection
- ❑ Do not offer personal experiences
- ❑ Know where you can refer your patrons
- ❑ Others?

Consumer Health Resources

- An Introduction to MedlinePlus.gov
 - <http://www.medlineplus.gov>
 - Designed for patients and their families and friends
 - 900+ Health Topics: including Diseases, Illnesses, Health Conditions and Wellness Issues
 - Drugs and Supplements
 - Videos and Cool Tools
 - English, Spanish, and more!



Until next time...

- Exercises

- Questions

- Contact me:

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